signed at Marrakesh after the Uruguay Round. These negotiations have accordingly commenced from 1.1.2000.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

New Legislation for Utilisation of India's Bio-Diversity

300. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the 15th Law Commission has recommended a new legislation to ensure conservation and sustainable utilization of India's bio-diversity and to provide safeguards against theft of traditional knowledge of local communities;

(b) if so, whether a new legislation is likely to be introduced in Parliament during the ensuing Budget Session; and

(c) if answer to part (b) above be in the affirmative the salient features of the new legislation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir,

(b) and (c) In order to protect the bio-diversity of the country, the Government are formulating a legislation on bio-diversity with the broad objectives of conservation and sustainable utilization of bio-diversity and equitable sharing of benefits out of the use of biological resources.

Government's Intervention to help Tobacco Dealers

301. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Tobacco manufacturers are not purchasing stocks at competitive price from certain districts like Prakasam and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to intervene in the matter and facilitate export of the stocks to Russia to help Tobacco dealers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Purchase of tobacco stocks from growers at auction platforms of Andhra Pradesh have just commenced on 22nd Feb, 2000 and is yet to gain its momentum in the ensuing auction season.

(b) As the bulk of tobacco exports are against rupee payment by Russia, the Government of India have asked the Russian Authorities to allocate sufficient